

Forward Thinking: It's Mint to Be

Mint helps to breathe freshness and coolness into a variety of flavor and fragrance applications.

Amy Marks-McGee, Trendincite LLC; trendincite@aol.com; 1-888-561-1229



According to A.M. Todd, whose assets were recently acquired by Wild Flavors, “Mint is one of the world’s most coveted and complex crops. A peppermint plant, for example, has more than 300 constituents and grows in dozens of regions, each of which imparts its own nuance to the oil.”

And, according to *Perfumer & Flavorist* magazine columnist and flavorist John Wright, “As a natural product, peppermint oil is of course highly attractive but, like many natural products, it does not quite match up to the absolute perfection desired by consumers. Peppermint oil is usually cut by removing small distillation fractions at the front and back ends of the oil. The front end cut reduces the unpleasant sulfur and vegetal notes, and the back end cut reduces the heavy, sweet and cloying notes. Both these modifications improve consumer perception of peppermint oils, but other components of the oil can also be adjusted to even greater effect. This is especially true when high levels of oil are used in confectionery applications and applies to menthol in particular.”

Wright concludes, “Higher levels of menthol naturally augment the desirable, clean mint aroma notes, but, more importantly, they also increase the cooling effect significantly, which is an important consumer benefit. The only drawback with higher levels of menthol is that they also involve noticeably higher levels of bitterness, which is certainly not a consumer benefit. Coolers can help to resolve this problem by augmenting the cooling effect without adding unattractive bitterness.”

To a layman, three common perceptions of mint are peppermint, spearmint and wintergreen. Mint is a standard toothpaste and chewing gum flavor because it signals freshness reinforced by its cooling sensations. In addition, mint—particularly peppermint and chocolate—are popular seasonal flavor combinations in the ready-to-drink (RTD) market and quick service restaurant (QSR) menus during the late fall and early winter. Furthermore, peppermint is known for its astringent and antiseptic properties and therefore is used in personal care products.

According to the Mint Industry Research Council, “45% of mint oil produced in the U.S. is used for flavoring chewing gum, 45% is used to flavor dentifrices (toothpaste, mouthwash, etc.) and the remaining 10% is used for [the] confectionery, pharmaceutical, liqueur and aromatherapy industries.” Because mint is widely accepted and expected



in these categories, the newest launches are based on innovative new applications and technology, not necessarily new mint flavors.

Pearly Whites

Mint continues to dominate new tooth care launches, predominantly in unique applications. For example, Lush’s new *Toothy Tabs* are an innovative solid toothpaste tab that foam like

toothpaste when chewed and brushed with a wet toothbrush. The *Toothy Tabs* are available in six flavors, two of which are based on mint. *Dirty* “is made with spearmint to freshen your breath” and *Ultrablast* is made with wasabi for its antibacterial properties and peppermint, spearmint and lavender oils “to make your mouth feel completely clean.”

Orabrush, the novel tongue brush and scraper, recently released the *Orabrush Tongue Foam Powered by Orazyme*, “an enzyme-infused foam designed to work with the company’s tongue cleaner to help eliminate bad breath” in *Mild Mint* flavor with a “cool refreshing taste.”

Vitamin-infused

Trendincite’s “Forward Thinking: Get Your Vitamins” article, which appeared in the March 2010 issue of *Perfumer & Flavorist* magazine, examined new applications and delivery systems for vitamins. Two years later, chewing gum is one of the latest vehicles for vitamin delivery.

The *Vitacare System* is formulated with vitamins A, C, D and E, calcium, and active ingredients cranberry extract, aloe vera, xylitol and silica to help whiten teeth. The products offered are *Multicare Whitening* and *Whitening Plus Toothpastes*, *Whitening Gums*, *Mouthwash* and *Eco-friendly Toothbrushes*. The whitening toothpastes and gums are available in three flavors: *Mint + Key Lime*, *Mint + Acai*, and *Mint + Pomegranate*. The gum is described as “an instant burst of cooling mint coupled with a fantastic explosion of superfruits for whiter teeth and fresher breath in between meals and brushing. 100% natural flavors and sweetened with xylitol.”

Like Vitacare, there are a variety of recent gum introductions enhanced with vitamins. *Stride Spark Gum Kinetic Mint* and *Kinetic Fruit* “contains 25% of the recommended daily value of vitamins B6 and B12 while *Vitamingum Fresh (peppermint)* “contains 12 vitamins to boost your daily nutritional intake ... a balanced formula of vitamins A, C, D, E, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B12, folic acid and biotin.”

Chew on This

To meet growing consumer demands and expectations for fresh breath, mint and mint combinations remain popular flavor directions for new gum introductions. Kraft partnered with Shaun White, the iconic snowboarder, to create *Stride's* newest flavor *Whitemint* “a long-lasting intense mint.” *Icebreakers Frost Wintercool* and *Peppermint* are Hershey's latest launches that are “packed with cooling crystals to deliver a powerful cooling sensation, giving you long-lasting fresh breath.”

As an extension to its chewing gum range, Mentos introduced *Pure Fresh* in *Fresh Mint* and *Wintergreen* with green tea extract “to purify your breath and leave an intense sensation of freshness.” Additionally, the company launched *Mentos Gum UP2U* “2 flavors of gum, 1 pack” in four variants, each with a fruit and mint combination: *Sweet Mint/Bubble Fresh*, *Mandarin Strawberry/Spearmint*, *Berry Watermelon/Fresh Mint*, and *Daylight Mint/Mintnight Mint*.

Rev7 gum in *Peppermint* and *Spearmint* flavors by Revolymex is a novel new product described as a “removable and degradable” gum “that with mild agitation in water will fully disintegrate into a fine powder within six months.”

Action Candy's newest *Pur Gum* flavor is *Pur eXcitement*, which combines spearmint and the flavor of “winterfresh.” Mint is also featured in *Pur Gum's* other three flavors—*Peppermint*, *Spearmint*, and *Pomegranate Mint*. According to the company, it is “the #1 selling aspartame-free gum infused with antioxidants, naturally colored and flavored, vegan-friendly, free of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and gluten-free.”

Fresh Drinks

Like gum and toothpaste, new RTD beverages and alcoholic beverages are also using mint flavors to signify freshness. And to add flavor depth and complexity, many new launches use fruit or chocolate combinations.

For example, to freshen breath, Fresh Corp. launched *Fresh 4* flavored waters, “which contain mint and menthol natural flavors to help freshen breath with a cool and tingling sensation,” available in four flavors: *Acai Pomegranate*, *Spearmint*, *Strawberry Chocolate* and *Tropical Citrus*. *Sipp's* latest

organic sparkling beverage flavor is *Mojo Berry*, which combines blackberry, mint and lime flavors, while *Wild Poppy's* newest flavor is *Peppermint Lemonade*. The popularity of mint is further exemplified, by *Rooibee Red Tea Watermelon Mint*, which “won first place in the 2011 North American Tea Championship Ready-to-Drink-Flavored/Sweetened category.”

Alcoholic beverages are also capitalizing on mint, with *Dr. McGillicuddy's Ice Mint* by Sazerac Co. and *Unity Vibration Kombucha Pear Mint* as recent examples.

Lastly, for a warmer interpretation, mint is repeatedly combined with chocolate. Honest Tea introduced *Honest CocoaNova*, a new line of beverages “made with USDA Certified Organic and Fair Trade Certified cacao beans,

which contain antioxidants and theobromine naturally found in dark chocolate.” The three flavors available are *Mint Cacao*, *Cherry Cacao* and *Mocha Cacao*. Entenmann’s Bakery and White Coffee Corp. collaborated to create a signature collection of flavored coffees and cocoa, and the cocoa will be available in *Original* and *Mint* flavors.

Holiday Specials

To create excitement during the holiday season, annually, QSRs launch seasonal flavors, often featuring peppermint and chocolate combinations.

In the last quarter of 2011, McDonald’s introduced *Peppermint Mocha* and *Peppermint Hot Chocolate* as limited seasonal McCafé drinks while Dunkin’ Donuts made its new *Mint Hot Chocolate* a permanent addition to its menu. Tim Hortons’ featured *Candy Cane White Hot Chocolate* “a mint-flavored hot chocolate, topped with whipped cream and candy cane sprinkles,” and *Candy Cane Chocolate Donut*, “a chocolate cake ring decorated in vanilla fondant and topped with candy cane sprinkles.” Dairy Queen’s blizzard flavor of the month for December was *Candy Cane Chill Blizzard*, which combined peppermint candy pieces, chocolate chunks and vanilla soft serve ice cream, and the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) introduced *Holiday Hotcakes* in seasonal flavors including *Eggnog*, *Spiced Pumpkin* and *Peppermint*, which were available until Jan. 1, 2012. The *White Chocolate Chip Mint* pancakes were “Buttermilk pancakes filled

with white chocolate chips and dressed with crunchy peppermint flakes and whipped topping.”

Also, although not a QSR launch, another notable holiday introduction was *Taylor’s Tonics’ 2011 Holiday Fizz* collection, which highlighted *Candy Cane Shake* as well as *Eggnog Fizz*, *Cranberry Dream*, and *Gingerbread House Sparkler*.

Mint Gets Personal

Peppermint is a natural astringent and antiseptic frequently used in facial care, foot care and lip care products. Like its use in flavored products, peppermint also signals freshness in fragranced products.

There are a variety of recent personal care launches that are formulated with peppermint. Facial care examples include *Boscia Peppermint Blotting Linens—Limited Edition*, which is “made from the leaf fibers of the exotic abaca tree plant and each sheet is infused with the invigorating essence of peppermint,” and *Bliss No ‘Zit’ Sherlock Breakout-Busting Rubberizing Mask* is a “rubberizing mask with tea tree, willow, menthol extracts and seaweed—to be optimally absorbed for pristine pores and a clear, shine-free complexion.” *Billy Jealousy Salad Days Body Scrub, Light Blue* is formulated with peppermint extract “an antioxidant [to] moisturize and stimulate circulation,” and *Jack Black Face Bar & Shave Soap* uses “rosemary and peppermint, which act as natural astringents to help normalize skin oiliness.”

In foot care, *Bliss* offers *Foot Patrol* a “triple-tasking peppermint-packed foot treatment [that] smoothes, softens, and refreshes even the roughest, toughest feet,” and *June Jacobs Spa Collection Peppermint Hand and Foot Polish* is a paraben- and preservative-free product that uses peppermint extract “to cool and soothe.”

Mint is also appearing in lip care across segments. The *Body Shop* released *100% Natural Lip Roll-On* in *Mint*, *Berry*, *Coconut*, *Orange* and *Rose*, and *Anthony Logistics For Men Lip Balm* is available in *Mint And White Tea*, *Blood Orange* and *Natural* variants. Bonnie Bell addressed the younger market and mint with its partnership with Girl Scouts of America. In August 2011, the company introduced the *Girl Scout Lip Smackers* line inspired by the flavors of the organization’s cookies, available in *Thin Mints*, *Chocolate Peanut Butter*, *Trefoils*, *Peanut Butter* and *Coconut Caramel Stripes*.

Future of Mint

Peppermint and spearmint are tried-and-true flavors that connote freshness, and they will remain popular in tooth care, chewing gum, RTD beverages, seasonal limited-edition flavors, and personal care products. Expect to see specific origins and varieties of mint and organic versions marketed like other conventional ingredients. Moreover, mint flavors will continue to be used in new applications and technology within these categories, creating opportunities for flavor and fragrance suppliers.

To purchase a copy of this article or others, visit www.PerfumerFlavorist.com/magazine. 